

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

NO. 745

A SERMON
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AT THE AGRICULTURAL HALL, ISLINGTON.

“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”
Ephesians 3:8.

THE apostle Paul felt it to be a great privilege to be allowed to preach the gospel. He did not look upon his calling as drudgery, or servitude, but he entered upon it with intense delight. All God's truly-sent servants have experienced much delight in the declaration of the gospel of Jesus; and it is natural that they should, for their message is one of mercy and love. If a herald were sent to a besieged city with the tidings that no terms of mercy would be offered, but that every rebel without exception should be put to death, I think he would go with lingering footsteps, stopping by the way to let out his heavy heart in sobs and groans; but if he were commissioned to go to the gates with the white flag to proclaim a free pardon, a general act of amnesty and oblivion, surely he would run as though he had wings on his heels, with a joyful quickness, to tell his fellow citizens the good pleasure of their merciful king. Heralds of salvation, you carry the most joyful of all messages to the sons of men! When the angels were commissioned for once to become preachers of the gospel, and it was but for once, they made the sky ring at midnight with their choral songs, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” They did not moan out a sorrowful dirge as of those proclaiming death, but the glad tidings of great joy were set to music, and announced with holy mirth and celestial song. “Peace on earth; glory to God in the highest” is the joyous note of the gospel—and in such a key should it ever be proclaimed.

We find the most eminent of God's servants frequently magnifying their office as preachers of the gospel. Whitefield was known to call his pulpit his throne; and when he stood upon some rising knoll to preach to the thousands gathered in the open air, he was happier than if he had assumed the imperial purple, for he ruled the hearts of men more gloriously than does a king! When Dr. Carey was laboring in India, and his son Felix had accepted the office of ambassador to the king of Burmah, Carey said, “Felix has driveled into an ambassador”—as though he looked upon the highest earthly office as an utter degradation if for it the minister of the gospel forsook his lofty vocation. Paul blesses God that this great grace was given to him that he might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; he looked upon it not as toil, but as a grace. Aspire to this office, young men whose souls are full of love to Jesus. Fired with sacred enthusiasm, covet earnestly the best gifts, and out of love to Jesus try whether you cannot in your measure tell to your fellow men the story of the cross. Men of zeal and ability, if you love Jesus, make the ministry your aim; train your minds to it; exercise your souls towards it; and may God the Holy Spirit call you to it, that you also may preach the Word of reconciliation to the dying thousands. The laborers still are few; may the Lord of the harvest thrust you into His work.

But while Paul was thus thankful for his office, his success in it greatly humbled him; the fuller a vessel becomes the deeper it sinks in the water. A plenitude of grace is a cure for pride. Those who are empty, and those especially who have little or nothing to do, may indulge a fond conceit of their abilities, because they are untried; but those who are called to the stern work of ministering among the sons of men, will often mourn their weakness, and in the sense of that weakness and unworthiness, they will go before God and confess that they are less than the least of all saints. I prescribe to any of you who seek humility, try hard work; if you would know your nothingness, attempt some great thing for Jesus. If you would feel how utterly powerless you are apart from the living God, attempt especially the great work of proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ! You will come back from the proclamation thankful that you were permitted to attempt it, but crying, “Who has believed our report? And to whom

is the arm the Lord revealed?" And you will know, as you never knew before, what a weak unworthy thing you are!

Although our apostle thus knew and confessed his weakness, there is one thing which never troubled him—he was never perplexed as to the subject of his ministry. I do not find the apostle in all his writings proposing to himself the question, "What shall I preach?" No, my friends, he had been taught in the college of Christ, and had thoroughly learned his one Subject, so that preferring it beyond all else, he said, with solemn decision, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." From his first sermon to his last, when he laid down his neck upon the block to seal his testimony with his blood, Paul preached Christ and nothing but Christ. He lifted up the cross, and extolled the Son of God who bled on it. His one and only calling here below was to cry, "Behold the Lamb! Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world!"

I pause, to ask, on my own account, the prayers of God's people yet again, that the Holy Spirit may be my helper this morning. O deny not my earnest request! I call the attention of you all to this great master subject, which engrossed all the powers and passions of such a one as Paul, and I shall beg you to notice first, *a glorious person mentioned*—the Lord Jesus Christ; secondly, *unsearchable riches spoken of*; and thirdly, which shall make our practical conclusion—*a royal intention implied*, the intention which Jesus had in His heart when He bade His servants preach His unsearchable riches.

I. First then, may the Spirit of God strengthen us in our weakness while we try to speak upon THIS GLORIOUS PERSON, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ was the first promise of God to the sons of men after the fall. When our first parents had been banished from the garden, all was dark before them. There was not a star to gild the cheerless midnight of their guilty and despairing souls until their God appeared to them, and said in mercy, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That was the first star which God set in the sky of man's hope. Years rolled after years, and the faithful looked up to it with comfort; that one promise stayed the soul of many a faithful one so that he died in hope, not having received the promise, but having seen it afar off, and having rejoiced in its beams. Whole centuries rolled away, but the seed of the woman did not come. Messiah, the great bruiser of the serpent's head, did not appear. Why did He tarry? The world was foul with sin and full of woe, where was the Shiloh who should bring it peace? Graves were dug by the millions, hell was filled with lost spirits, but where was the promised One, mighty to save? He was waiting till the fullness of time should come; He had not forgotten, for He had God's will in His heart; His desire to save souls was consuming His heart; He was but waiting until the word should be given. And when it was given, lo, He came delighting to do the Father's will! Do you seek him? Behold, in Bethlehem's manger Emmanuel is born, God is with us. Before your eyes He lies who was both the Son of Mary, and the Son of the Blessed, an infant, and yet infinite, of a span long, and yet filling all eternity, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and yet too great for space to hold Him. Thirty and more years He lived on earth: the latter part of His life was spent in a ministry full of suffering to Himself, but filled with good to others. "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Never man spoke like that man; He was a man on fire with love; a man without human imperfections, but with all human sympathies; a man without the sins of manhood, but with something more than the sorrows of common manhood piled upon Him. There was never such a man as He, so great, so glorious in His life, and yet He is the pattern and type of manhood. He reached His greatest when He stooped the lowest. He was seized by His enemies one night when wrestling in prayer, betrayed by the man who had eaten bread with Him; He was dragged before tribunal after tribunal, through that long and sorrowful night, and wrongfully accused of blasphemy and sedition. They scourged Him; though none of His works deserved a blow, yet the plowers made deep furrows on His back. They mocked Him; though He merited the homage of all intelligent beings, yet they spat in His face, and struck Him with their mailed fists, and said, "Prophecy, who is he that struck You?"

He was made lower than a slave; even the abject opened their mouths with laughter at Him, and the slaves scoffed at Him. To end the scene, they took Him through the streets of the Jerusalem over which He had wept; they hounded Him along the Via Dolorosa, out through the gate, to the mount of doom. I think I see Him, with eyes all red with weeping He turns to the matrons of Salem, and cries, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but for yourselves, and for your children." Can you see Him bearing that

heavy cross, ready to faint beneath the burden? Can you endure to see Him, when, having reached the little mound outside the city, they hurl Him on His back, and drive the cruel iron through His hands and feet? Can you bear to see the spectacle of blood and anguish as they lift Him up between heaven and earth, made a sacrifice for the sin of His people? My words shall be few, for the vision is too sad for language to depict. He bleeds, He thirsts, He groans, He cries—at last He dies—a death whose unknown griefs are not to be imagined, and were they known would be beyond expression by human tongue.

Now, it was the history of the crucifixion which Paul delighted to preach—Christ crucified was his theme—this old, old story, which you have heard from your childhood, the story of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us. You all know that our Lord, after He had been taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb, lingered there but a few short hours, and then on the third day rose again from the dead, the same, yet not the same—a man, but no more despised and rejected. He communed with His servants in a familiar and yet glorious manner for 40 days, and cheered and comforted their hearts, and then, from the top of Olivet, in the sight of the company, He ascended to His Father's throne. Follow Him with your hearts, if you cannot with your eyes. Behold Him as the angels meet Him, and—

*“Bring His chariot from on high,
To bear Him to His throne;
Clap their triumphant hands, and cry,
‘The glorious work is done.’”*

There He sits—faith sees Him this very day—at the right hand of God, even the Father, pleading with authority for His people; ruling heaven, and earth, and hell, for the keys thereof swing at His belt; waiting till, on the flying cloud, He shall descend to judge the quick and dead, and distribute the vengeance or the reward. It was this glorious person of whom Paul delighted to speak. He preached the doctrines of the gospel, but he did not preach them apart from the person of Christ. Do not many preachers make a great mistake by preaching doctrine instead of preaching the Savior? Certainly the doctrines are to be preached, but they ought to be looked upon as the robes and vestments of the man Christ Jesus, and not as complete in themselves. I love justification by faith—I hope I shall never have a doubt about that grand truth of God; but the cleansing efficacy of the precious blood appears to me to be the best way of putting it. I delight in sanctification by the Spirit—but to be conformed to the image of Jesus is a still sweeter and more forcible way of viewing it. The doctrines of the gospel are a golden throne upon which Jesus sits as King—not a hard, cold stone rolled at the door of the sepulcher in which Christ is hidden. Brothers and sisters, I believe this to be the mark of God's true minister that he preaches Christ as his one choice and delightful theme! In the old romance novels, they tell us that at the gate of a certain noble hall there hung a horn, and none could blow that horn but the true heir to the castle and its wide domains. Many tried it. They could make sweet music on other instruments; they could wake the echoes by other bugles; but that horn was mute, let them blow as they might. At last, the true heir came, and when he set his lips to the horn, shrill was the sound and indisputable his claim!

The true minister is he who can preach Christ. Let him preach anything else in the world, he has not proved his calling, but if he shall preach Jesus and the resurrection, he is in the apostolic succession. If Christ crucified is the great delight of his soul, the very marrow of his teaching, the fatness of his ministry, he has proved his calling as an ambassador of Christ. Brothers, the Christian minister should be like these golden spring flowers which we are so glad to see. Have you observed them when the sun is shining? They open their golden cups, and each one whispers to the great sun, “Fill me with your beams.” But when the sun is hidden behind a cloud, where are they? They close their cups and droop their heads. So should the Christian feel the sweet influences of Jesus; so especially should the Christian minister be subject to his Lord that Jesus must be his Sun, and he must be the flower which yields itself to the Sun of Righteousness. Happy would it be for us if our hearts and our lips could become like Anacreon's harp which was wedded to one subject, and would learn no other. He wished to sing of the sons of Atreus, and the mighty deeds of Hercules, but his harp sounded only love; and when he would have sung of Cadmus, his harp refused—it would sing of love only. Oh, to speak of Christ alone!—to be tied and bound to this one theme forever; to speak only of Jesus, and of the amazing love of the glorious Son of God, who “though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.” This is the subject which is both “seed for the sower, and bread for the eater.” This is the live coal for the lips of the preacher, and the master

key to the heart of the hearer! This is the tune for the minstrels of earth, and the song for the harpers of heaven! Lord, teach it to us more and more, and we will tell it out to others!

Before I leave this subject I feel bound to make two or three remarks. You will perceive that the apostle Paul preached the unsearchable riches of Christ, not the dignity of manhood, or the grandeur of human nature; he preached not man, but man's Redeemer. Let us do the same. Moreover, he did not preach up the clergy and the church, but Christ alone. Some of the gentlemen who claim to be in the apostolic succession could hardly have the effrontery to claim to be the successors of Paul. I believe that our modern "priests" of Rome are in the apostolic succession, I have never doubted that they are the lineal successors of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Master; but no other apostle would endure them for so much as an hour! If Paul had been their leader, would he have preached the unsearchable riches of priestcraft as they do? Do not they preach up their own priestly power? Did Paul do this? Is not their one great theme the unsearchable riches of baptism; the unsearchable riches of the Eucharist, the blessed bread and the blessed wine; the unsearchable riches of their confession and absolution; the unsearchable riches of their robes, and their vestments, and I know not what else of the rags of the whore of Babylon? A fine day is this in which we are to go back to the superstitions of the dark ages—so dark that our forefathers could not bear them—and for the unsearchable cunning of priests are to give up the unsearchable riches of Christ! We are told [by the priests of Rome] that the Reformation was a mistake; but we tell these false priests to their faces that they are liars and know not the truth of God! Beloved, Paul cared nothing for priestcraft; and this Book has not a word in it in favor of priestcraft. With Paul and with this Book all believers in Jesus are priests, and God's only clergy. Paul never posted bills upon the walls of Jerusalem, with black crosses on them, warning men that they would not be able to meet Christ at the Day of Judgment if they did not keep Good Friday; but I will tell you what Paul *did*—he wrote to the Galatians, "You observe days, months, and times, and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." This whole abomination of ritualism was the utter abhorrence of the apostle—in its first form of Judaism it stirred up his whole soul with indignation; it brought the blood into his cheeks; he never was mightier in denouncing anything than when dealing heavy blows at ceremonialism; he said, "Neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that works by love." Paul preached up no priest whether he lived at Rome or Canterbury; he exalted no class of men arrogantly pretending to have power to save. He would have been out of all patience with a set of simpletons decked out as Guys [effigy of Guy Fawkes paraded and burned on Guy Fawkes Day] and dressed up as if they were meant to amuse children in a nursery. He never taught the worship of these calves—Jesus alone was his subject, and the unsearchable riches of His grace!

Mark you, on the other hand, Paul did not preach up the unsearchable riches of philosophy, as some do. "Yes," say some, "We must please this thinking age, this thoughtful people; we must educate a people who will reject all testimony because they will not be credulous; who will believe nothing but what they can understand, because, indeed, their understanding is so amazingly clear, so perfect, so all but divine!" Not so, the apostle; he would have said to these philosophical gentlemen, "Stand away; I have nothing at all that can make me kindred with you! I preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, not the uncertainties of philosophical speculation; I give the people something to believe, something tangible to lay hold of, not superstitious, it is true, but divinely accredited; not concocted by the wisdom of man, but revealed by the wisdom of God." My dear friends, we must come back to the gospel of Paul, and may God bring all His ministering servants more and more clearly back to it, that we may have nothing to preach but that which clusters around the cross; which glows and glistens like a sacred halo of light around the head of the Crucified One; that we may lift up nothing but Jesus, and say, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. Secondly, Paul preached THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

Paul had no stinted Savior to present to a few, no narrow-hearted Christ to be the head of a clique, no weak Redeemer who could pardon only those little offenders who scarcely needed it, but he preached a great Savior to the great masses, a great Savior to great sinners; he preached the Conqueror with dyed garments, traveling in the greatness of His strength, whose name is "mighty to save." Let us inquire in what respects we may ascribe to our Lord Jesus the possession of unsearchable riches. Our answer is, first, He has *unsearchable riches of love to sinners as they are*. Jesus so loved the souls of men that we

can only use the “so,” but we cannot find the word to match it. In the French Revolution, there was a young man condemned to the guillotine, and shut up in one of the prisons. He was greatly loved by many, but there was one who loved him more than all put together. How do we know this? It was his own father; and the love he bore his son was proved in this way: when the lists were called, the father, whose name was exactly the same as his son’s, answered to the name, and the father rode in the gloomy wagon out to the place of execution, and his head rolled beneath the axe instead of his son’s, a victim to mighty love. See here an image of the love of Christ to sinners; for thus Jesus died for the ungodly, viewed as such. If they had not been ungodly, neither they nor He had needed to have died; if they had not sinned, there would have been no need for a suffering Savior, but Jesus proved His boundless love in “that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Your name was in the condemned list, my fellow sinner, but, if you believe in Jesus, you shall find that your name is there no longer, for Christ’s name is put in your place, and you shall learn that He suffered for you, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring you to God. Is not this the greatest wonder of divine love that it should be set upon us *as sinners*? I can understand God’s loving reformed sinners and repenting sinners; but here is the glory of it, “God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners [*yet sinners!*] Christ died for us.” O my hearers, from my inmost heart I pray that this boundless wealth of love on the part of Jesus to those who were rebels and enemies, may win your hearts to love the heavenly lover in return!

In the next place, Jesus has *riches of pardon for those who repent of their sins*. My Lord Jesus, by His death, has become immensely rich in pardoning power—so rich indeed that no guiltiness can possibly transcend the efficacy of His precious blood. There is one sin which He never will forgive—there is but one—and I am convinced that you have not committed that sin against the Holy Spirit if you have any feeling of repentance or desire towards God; for the sin which is unto death brings death with it to the conscience, so that when once committed, the man ceases to feel. If you desire pardon, sinner, there is no reason why you should not have it, and have it now! The blood of Christ can wash out blasphemy, adultery, fornication, lying, slander, perjury, theft, murder. Though you have raked in the very kennels of hell till you have blackened yourself to the color of a devil, yet, if you will come to Christ and ask mercy, He will absolve you from all sin. Do but wash in the bath which He has filled with blood and “though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Do not misunderstand me, I mean just this, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is not meant exclusively for you respectable people, who always appear to be so religious, but for you who are irreligious, for you who are not even moral, or sober, or honest. I tell you the gospel of Christ is meant for the scum of the population; it is meant for the lowest of the low, for the worst of the worst. There is no den in London where the Savior cannot work; there is no loathsome haunt of sin too foul for Him to cleanse. The heathen talked of their Hercules that he cleansed the Augean stables by turning a river through them, and so washing away the filth of ages; if your heart is such a stable, Christ is greater than the mightiest Hercules—He can cause the river of His cleansing blood to flow right through your heart, and your iniquities, though they are a heap of abominations, shall be put away forever! Riches of love to sinners as such, and riches of pardon to sinners who repent, are stored up in the Lord Jesus.

Again, *Christ has riches of comfort for all who mourn*. Have I the happiness of having before me some who mourn before the Lord? Blessed are you, for you shall be filled. What is the cause of your weeping? Is it your sin? Christ has a handkerchief that can wipe away such tears. He can blot out your sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud your iniquities. Do but come to Him, and your deepest sorrow shall disappear beneath the influence of His sympathetic love. Are you sorrowful because you have lost a friend? He will be a friend to you. Have you been deceived and betrayed? My Master can meet that craving of your nature after friendship and sympathy. Confide in Him, and He will never forsake you. Oh, I cannot tell you how rich He is in consolation, but the Holy Spirit can tell you! If you do but get Jesus, you shall find, as Bernard used to say, that He is “honey to the mouth, music to the ears, and heaven to the heart.” Win Christ, and you shall need nothing beyond Him—lay hold of Him, and you shall say with the apostle, “I have learned in whatever state I am, therewith to be content,” for He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.”

My Master’s unsearchable riches are also of another kind. Do you thirst for knowledge? *Jesus has riches of wisdom*. The desire to know has sent men roving over the entire world, but he who finds Jesus

may stay at home and be wise! If you sit at His feet, you shall know what Plato could not teach you, and what Socrates never learned. When the old school men could not answer and defend a proposition, they were apt to say, "I will go to Aristotle: he shall help me out." If you do but learn of Christ, He shall help you out of all difficulties; and that which is most useful for your soul to know, the knowledge which will last you in eternity, Christ shall teach you. Think not that the gospel of Christ, because it is simple, is therefore mere child's play. Oh, no! It has that in it which an angel's intellect unilluminated of the Holy Spirit might fail to master; the highest ranks of seraphim, still lost in wonder gaze upon it. Come to my Master, and you shall be made wise unto salvation.

Let me not weary you with so great a message. Perhaps I tell it badly, but the matter of it is worthy of your ears, and worthy of your hearts. *My Master has riches of happiness to bestow upon you!* After all, he is the rich man who wears heart's-ease in his button hole. The man who can say, "I have enough," is richer than the peer of the realm who is discontented. Believe me, my Lord can make you to lie down in green pastures, and lead you beside still waters. There is no music like the music of His pipe, when He is the Shepherd and you are the sheep, and you lie down at His feet. There is no love like His, neither earth or heaven can match it! If you did but know it, you would prize it beyond all mortal joys, and say with our poet—

*"Such as find You find such sweetness
Deep, mysterious, and unknown;
Far above all worldly pleasures,
If they were to meet in one;
My Beloved,
Over the mountains hasten away."*

I speak experimentally. I have had more joy in half-an-hour's communion with Christ than I have found in months of other comforts. I have had much to make me happy—many successes and smiles of providence which have cheered and comforted my heart; but they are all froth on the cup, mere bubbles—the foam of life, and not its true depths of bliss. To know Christ and to be found in Him—oh, this is life! This is joy! This is marrow and fatness, wine on the lees well refined! My Master does not treat His servants churlishly; He gives to them as a king gives to a king; He gives to them two heavens—a heaven below in serving Him here, and a heaven above in delighting in Him forever!

And now I shall close this poor talk of mine about these priceless riches, by saying that *the unsearchable riches of Christ will be best known in eternity*. The riches of Christ are not so much to be enjoyed here as *there*. He will give you by the road and on the way to heaven all your needs; your place of defense shall be the munitions of rocks, your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure; but it is there, *there*, THERE, where you shall hear the song of them who triumph, the shout of them who feast. My dear hearer, if you get Christ, you have obtained riches which you can take with you in the hour of death. The rich man clutched his bags of money, and as he laid them on his heart, he murmured, "They will not do, they will not do; take them away." If you receive Jesus into your heart, He will be death's best antidote. When your disembodied spirit quits this poor clay carcass, as it must, what will your silver and gold do for you then? What will your farms and your broad acres do for you then? You must leave them all behind. Even if men buy you a coffin of gold, or bury you in a tomb of marble, yet of what good will that be? But oh, if you have Christ, you can fly up to heaven to your treasure, and there you shall be rich to all the intents of bliss, world without end!

Now, dear friends, if I could have spoken as I wanted to speak, I would have done so; but the subject would have been the same. Paul preached the gospel better than I do, but even *he* could not preach a *better gospel*. Let me close this point by a few words. My Master has such riches that you cannot count them; you cannot guess them, much less can you convey their fullness in words. They are *unsearchable*! You may look, and search, and weigh, but Christ is a greater Christ than you think Him to be when your thoughts are at their greatest. My Master is more able to pardon than you to sin, more able to forgive than you to transgress. My Master is more ready to supply than you are to ask, and ten thousand times more prepared to save than you are to be saved. Never tolerate low thoughts of my Lord Jesus. Your highest estimates will dishonor Him; when you put the crown on His head, you will only crown Him with silver when He deserves gold; when you sing the best of your songs, you will only give Him poor,

discordant music, compared with what He deserves, but oh, do believe in Him, that He is a great Christ, a mighty Savior! Great sinner, come and do Him honor by trusting in Him as a great Savior! Come with your great sins and your great cares, and your great needs! Come, and welcome. Come to Him now, and the Lord will accept you, and accept you without upbraiding you.

III. Lastly, there must have been A ROYAL INTENTION in the heart of Christ in sending out Paul to preach of His unsearchable riches, because every man must have a motive for what he does, and beyond all question, Jesus Christ has a motive.

Did you ever hear of a man who employed a number of persons to go about to proclaim his riches, and call hundreds of people together, and thousands, as on this occasion, simply to tell them that So-and-So was very rich? Why, the crowds would say, "What is that to us?" But if at the conclusion, the messenger could say, "But all these riches he presents to you, and whoever among you shall desire to be made rich, can be enriched now by him." Ah! Then you would say, "Now we see the sense of it. Now we perceive the gracious drift of it all." Now, my Lord Jesus Christ is very strong, but all that strength is pledged to help a poor weak sinner to enter into heaven! My Lord Christ is a great King, and He reigns with irresistible power; but all that sovereign power He swears to give to believers to help them to reign over their sins! My Lord Jesus is as full of merit as the sea is full of salt, but every atom of that merit He vows to give to sinners who will confess that they have no merits of their own, and will trust in Him! Yes, and once more, my Lord Christ is so glorious that the very angels are not bright in His presence, for He is the Sun, and they are but as twinkling stars; but all this glory He will give *you*, poor sinner, and make you glorious in His glory if you will but trust Him! There is a motive, then, on our Lord's part for bidding us preach a full Christ.

I think I hear a whisper somewhere—there is a poor heart standing crowded in the aisle, and it is saying to itself, "Ah, *I am full of sin! I am weak! I am lost. I have no merit!*" My dear hearer, you do not need any merit, nor any strength, nor any goodness in yourself, for Jesus presents you with an abundance of all these in Himself. I will not care whether I have money in my own purse or not, if I have a kind friend who says, "All that I have is yours." If I may go and draw upon him whenever I please for whatever I wish, I will not desire to be independent of him, but I will live upon his fullness. Poor sinner, you must do the same! You do not need merits or strength apart from Christ—take my Master, and He will be enough for you while you shall joyfully sing, "Christ is my All!"

Two or three more words, then. The first is this—*How rich those must be who have Christ for a friend.* Will you not seek to be friends with Him? If it is true that all Christ has He gives to His people—and this is asserted over and over again in this Book—then, oh, how unspeakably blessed must those be who can say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His!" They who get Christ to be their own property are like the man who, having long eaten of fruit from a certain tree, was no longer satisfied with having the fruit, but he needed take up the tree and plant it in his own garden. Happy those who have Christ planted as the tree of life in the soil of their hearts! You not only have His grace, and His love, and His merit, but you have HIMSELF. He is all your own. Oh, that sweet word, Jesus is mine! Jesus is mine! All that there is in His humanity, in His deity, in His living and in His dying, in His reigning and in His second advent—all is mine, for Christ is mine!

How foolish, on the other hand, must those be who will not have Christ when He is to be had for the asking! Who prefer the baubles and the bubbles of this world, and let the solid gold of eternity go by! O fools, you play with shadows and miss the substance! You dig and toil, and cover your faces with sweat, and lose your nightly rest to get this world's fleeting good, while you neglect Him who is the eternal good! O fools and slow of heart, you court this harlot world, with her painted face, when the beauties of my Master are infinitely more rich and rare! Oh, if you did but know Him, if you could but see His unspeakable riches, you would fling your toys to the wind, and follow after Him with all your heart and soul!

"But may I have Him?" asks one. May you, indeed! Who is to say no to you? Did not you hear the sweet notes of the hymn just now, "Come and welcome, come and welcome"? When heaven's big bell rings, it always sounds forth that silver note for sinners—"Come and welcome! Come and welcome!" Leave your sins, leave your follies, and leave your self-righteousness. Jesus Christ stands at the open door of grace, more willing to receive you than you are to be received by Him. "Come and welcome,

come and welcome.” At the top of the Hospice of St. Bernard, in the storm, when the snow is falling fast, the monks ring the great bell, and when the way cannot be seen, the traveler can almost hear the way to the house of refuge across the snowy waste. So would I ring that bell this morning! Poor lost traveler, with your sins and your fears blowing cold into your face, “Come and welcome, come and welcome,” to a Savior once dead and buried for you, but now risen and pleading for you at the right hand of God! If you cannot see your way, yet hear it. “Hear, and your soul shall live; and He will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

You need nothing but Christ, dear heart; you need pump up no tears of repentance to help Christ, for He will give you repentance if you seek it of Him. You must come to Him to get repentance; you must not seek that gospel blessing anywhere but at the cross. You will need no baptisms and Lord’s Suppers to rely upon; it will be your duty as a believer to profess your faith in Him, and to remember Him at His table, but these things will not help your salvation, you will be saved by Jesus and by Him alone! You need experience no terrors, you need undergo no preparation; Christ is ready to receive you *now*! Like the surgeon whose door is open for every accident that may occur; like the great hospitals on our side the river, where, let the case be what it may, the door swings open the moment an entrance is demanded—such is my Master! Unsearchable riches are in Him, though unsearchable poverty may be in you—

*“Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream,
All the fitness He requires,
Is to feel your need of Him—
This He gives you,
'Tis His Spirit’s rising beam.”*

All this week long I have been fretting and worrying because I cannot preach to you as I wish, and when each of my sermons, here, [Agricultural Hall] has been over, I have wished that I could preach it again in a more earnest and fervent manner. But what can I do? O my hearers, I can preach Christ to you, but I cannot preach you to Christ! I can tell you that if you trust Him you shall be saved; I can declare to you that as the Son of God now risen, He is able to save to the uttermost them who come to Him—but I cannot make you come! Yet, I thank God, since last Sunday I have heard of some who have come; I have heard good news of some who, by the Holy Spirit’s power, have believed in Jesus! Are there no more eyes that will look at my Master’s wounds? Are there no more hearts that will fall in love with my Master’s beauties? Must I come a wooing for Him, and get so small a return? Must it be ones and twos out of the 20,000 of you? God forbid it! God send us a greater rate of fruit than this, a hundred-fold harvest to a hundred-fold congregation. Pray, believers, pray for a blessing! Pray that God may strike these lips dumb before next Sunday if He will do more good by some other preacher than by me! Ask nothing for me, but ask large things for my Lord, for the Crucified One! Pray that these great gatherings may not be without a permanent result which shall tell upon the impiety of this city; yes, and tell upon the piety of it, too, slaying the first, and stimulating the second! God send forth the Spirit of His grace, and unto Him shall be the praise, world without end! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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